

# Parents Give Views on Grading Systems for School

## She Likes Grades

Editor, Torrance HERALD:  
In regards to report cards for our children, I do believe that marks such as A, B, C, D, and F for "failure" would be more satisfactory than the present system. I have deduced from talks with the teachers that it is very difficult to mark a child an exact figure on his work. The present system is a lot of extra writing for the teacher, takes a great deal of time, and really doesn't tell us parents much of anything.

For third grade and below the type of report now being given seems to be quite satisfactory, but starting with the fourth grade we think we would like to have the marks in letters. We know the teachers spend a great deal of extra time on conferences and it is very satisfying to talk to the teacher at least once a year to meet him (or her) and discuss a child's work and any difficulties.

We also think it is only fair if we can have a more satisfactory type of report that not only tells us more exactly how the child is progressing, but cuts down on some of the great amount of the work a teacher has to put in.

I certainly think we should all give a very sincere vote of thanks to all of the teachers in Torrance, as we have surely found every one of them to be not only good teachers, but pleasant to know.

MRS. WILLIAM D. TRUIR

## How Are They Doing?

Editor, Torrance HERALD:  
We feel very strongly on the ABC grades in all schools. We got them when we went to school and we believe we all learned our work because of the ABC grades.

We have lived in Torrance for seven years, one son starting in the third grade and the other son in the first grade and we can truthfully say their report cards have told us nothing. This reporting system has been a sore spot with us all the time and feel that now that it has public notice, is the time to do something about it.

As for parent conference, we like them only for one reason, and that is, we always find out how their conduct is, not their work. I just had a conference for my youngest son and was told, "He is capable of doing his work, but he just can't seem to settle down to it." That's all. I have heard this every conference I ever had for him.

This year, our oldest son entered high school and is receiving grades and we feel he is doing much better in school now as he can compare his grades to others and try to do better than he has done in the past. He likes the grades better as he can see what they mean by looking at them and doesn't need to read a lot of writing and figure out what the teacher means.

Parent conferences are fine once in a while, but grades are so much better

for the teachers (not so much work), the parents, and last but not least, the children.

PARENTS HOT ON THE SUBJECT

## Competition is Trend

Editor, Torrance HERALD:  
I have never liked the written reports for they tell me nothing other than my children are getting along well with other children. The conference each parent has with the teacher could be had any time a parent wished to visit school and talk about a child instead of a designated time set by the teacher.

The whole trend in life is competition and I believe most children would do better work if they received a grade instead of a written analysis about what they are doing.

I also believe grades should be given from the first grade. I see no reason to wait until a child is in the seventh grade to begin a transition. Most other states use lettered grades and would no doubt laugh at report grade if the child were to move to another state where ABC grades are used.

I would like to see the Torrance Educational Advisory Committee give much thought to this issue, and I, for one, hope they can change the present grading system from written reports to the grading system used by other schools in other states.

MRS. R. C. PENNER

## Rude Awakening

Editor, Torrance HERALD:  
Our two children have attended Torrance schools since 1947. They are now in high school. Then came the rude awakening. They used to get report cards that stated "doing well in etc., etc., but could do better." (Well, couldn't everyone?) Then came the D's and C's and minuses and pluses.

Do you think that a 14-year-old is capable of grasping the fact that after a glorified report card, he deserves a card with straight D's? Report card day is always a blue day in this family, at least since high school. We feel that to be graded in the seventh and eighth grades at least would prepare him and his parents to show what he is capable of and where he needs the most help.

He shouldn't have to wait till he gets in high school and after the first or second D, lose heart and give up, saying he can't do any better.

TWO CONCERNED PARENTS

## For Letter Grades

Editor, Torrance HERALD:  
Letter grades given twice a year would be valuable, we think for most seventh and eighth grade students and their parents. They would show the student's achievement in various fields compared with that of others in the same grade.

In order to eliminate as much as possible the effects of different opinions and preferences of different teachers, it would be helpful

to have the letter grades based on the results of standard achievement tests, perhaps in November and in May.

In addition to the usual written achievement tests, the children might be given tests of strength, speed, and skill, to determine their grade in physical education, musical tests, and any others that seem desirable.

Of course, in a few subjects such as art and oral English, the teachers would have to rely on their own observations and judgment in giving grades. In general, we feel that the letter grades would give a much clearer picture of a student's progress than the present written "evaluations" do with their stereotyped phrases.

However, this does not mean that the present system of conferences between parents and teachers should be abandoned. Almost all parents interested in their children's welfare probably welcome the chance for a face-to-face discussion with their teachers. During one of these talks the teacher could also tell the parent what kind of grades could be reasonably expected, considering the child's level of ability.

Thus the conferences and the graded report cards would supplement each other, and together they would

give more complete information than we now get.

MR. and MRS. W. J. HANSON  
IRENE HANSON seventh grade.  
CHARLES HANSON, sixth grade.

## One Less Hurdle

Editor, Torrance HERALD:  
In regard to grades in the seventh and eighth grades, I am for them.

Students know among themselves the one who are slacking or working—doing passing or failing work. I think the use of grades with the parent conferences can be done without putting undue stress on the child. The switch to grades in the seventh and eighth grades would make one less hurdle for the students to have when they enter high school.

MRS. PHILIP CARPENTER Torrance.

## Should Be Grateful

It seems to me that parents should be grateful to a school system which makes the teachers available to parents for conferences about their children. In many school districts, it is difficult to get the attention of a busy teacher.

Grades are an easy way to report to parents who do not want to spend the time it takes to understand and provide outlets for the interests of their children. Such a parent looks at the grades, reacts with proper emotion

which the sight of arbitrary evaluation calls forth—praise or a lecture—and that is all he needs to do.

Back to the television or whatever. But this sense of competition is stimulated as Junior receives good grades and he has something to talk about to other adults. So much more satisfying than general discussion about social adjustment or special interests. Who cares about those?

As for progress reports—this form of written review will become mighty familiar to the parent if he goes to work in one of the major industries. It is used by many firms as a basis for wage and job advancement. And most bosses will not use the A-B-C system. Somewhere they will have acquired a vocabulary equal to the task by letting a worker know just how his work is rated.

Just because this conference and written review sys-

tem was used "back home" or "back when," there is insufficient reason to say, "It is no good."

GENEVIE ROSIN

Torrance parents continue to write in response to a HERALD query last Thursday on the grading system. A number of letters were published here Sunday, most of them favoring a return to the A, B, C grading system, at least in the seventh and eighth grades. Only a few persons out of the dozens writing have expressed a preference for the present gradeless form of reporting.

This is not a poll, but a chance for Torrance residents to express their opinions on the matter for the guidance of school officials. Letters on the subject should be mailed to The Editor, Torrance HERALD, 1619 Gramercy Ave., Torrance.



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